

The San Francisco VA Medical Center is committed to honoring the spirit of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) regarding the accommodation of service animals while also assuring the health and safety of patients, staff and visitors. To achieve these goals, SFVAMC prohibits the presence of all animals, **except service animals**, at the Medical Center, Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOCs), and aboard all VA shuttle vans and buses.

What is a service animal?

The Americans with Disabilities Act defines a service animal as a dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disability. 28 C.F.R. § 36.104 (eff. Mar. 15, 2011).

Can I bring my animal to the Medical Center or VA Clinic?

- Animals, other than service animals, are NOT permitted inside the Medical Center or CBOC buildings.

- NO animals, including service animals, are permitted in areas of the Medical Center or CBOCs where:

- Barrier protective measures are required (gloves, masks, or gowns).
- The animal's presence or behavior would create a fundamental alteration in the nature of the care or services provided.
- The animal's presence or behavior would pose a direct threat to the health or safety of patients, staff, or visitors.



- Some specific clinics where animals are NOT allowed include:

- Emergency Department
- Operating Room
- Post-Anesthesia Care Unit
- Hemodialysis Unit
- Medical Procedure Unit
- Ambulatory Surgery Unit
- Dental Clinic
- Catheterization Laboratory
- Interventional Radiology
- Gastro-Intestinal
- Eye, Ear, Nose, & Throat
- Plastic & Reconstructive Surgery
- Hematology/Oncology
- Dermatology

- Service animals must be harnessed, leashed, or tethered at all times.

- Service animals that are not under the control of the partner/handler and/or are not housebroken

will not be permitted inside the buildings of the Medical Center, CBOCs or aboard VA shuttle vans/buses.

- SFVAMC staff will NOT provide care or food for a service animal under any circumstance.

- Tying up animals on Medical Center grounds is NOT permitted.

- Animal owners are solely responsible for removing animal waste from the buildings and grounds of the Medical Center or CBOCs.

What if I will be seen as an inpatient?

Animals, including service animals, are generally not allowed to accompany a Veteran during an overnight stay. However, exceptions may be made on a case-by-case basis. Please talk to your doctor if you have a service animal and will be coming for an inpatient stay. If approval is given for your service animal to stay with you

overnight, you may need to provide proof that your service dog is healthy and is current with immunizations. Arrangements for the care of your service animal during your inpatient stay must be made before you are admitted into the hospital.

What if I am told my animal must be removed?

Animals in Cars

Animals may be left in cars as long as there is enough air flow to prevent animal distress. If the VA Police see an animal in distress, they will first try to get in contact with the owner. If unsuccessful, the VA Police will take action to free the animal.

Arrangements for Animal Care

Veterans will still have the opportunity to be seen at the facility without their animal if they are able to make other arrangements for the animal's care. For instance, the Veteran may be able to call someone to come to the facility to pick up the animal.

San Francisco Animal Care & Control

If other arrangements for the care of the animal cannot be made and the Veteran must be seen, due to a medical emergency, or chooses to be seen, the VA Police will call San Francisco Animal Care & Control to pick up & board the animal. The Veteran is responsible to pay the cost of this service.

I have questions, who can I talk to?

Please contact our Patient Advocate Office at (415) 750-6650.

San Francisco VA Medical Center
4150 Clement Street
San Francisco, CA 94121
(415) 221-4810
www.sanfrancisco.va.gov



SERVICE ANIMALS



A Guide for Individuals with Disabilities